



SPADES AND CLUBS



U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION 25

Volume 1, Issue 3 May 2006

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S.T.R.A.T.I.S. Eliminates Language Barrier

Forward operating Marines, Seabees and Soldiers in Western Iraq are talking to each other thanks to the Storage Retrieval Automated Tracking Integrated System (STRATIS). The software allows personnel working at construction material depots (Class-4 yards) to communicate effectively with contractors, other Class-4 yards, and the 9th Naval Construction Regiment.

Forward operating units use STRATIS because materials they need are often procured outside the normal supply system. Rather than continually ordering new supplies, the military can save time and money if Class-4 yards can accurately track supplies and share that information with each other.

By knowing what material is available from neighboring sites, yard supervisors make sure material is readily available for their clients so that construction schedules can be met.

While the 9th NCR manages the system, it is dependent upon the Seabees, soldiers, and Marines at these yards to submit current inventories and descriptions of newly arriving supplies on a daily basis.

Tracking routine items like electrical supplies is critical because many parts are not interchangeable. If the customer knows what is available and in what quantity, then they can plan accordingly.

Seabees from NMCB 25, NMCB 40, and the 9th NCR operate Class-4 yards in Iraq. Their main mission is to supply construction materials to 9th Regiment projects, but they also support other units.

By electronically managing the material on each site, yard workers know where material is located and how

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UTCS (SCW) Don Rumbach, BU1 Thor Leonard, CE1 Glenn Thieling, CE2 Mathew Torvyk, EO3 Luis Rodriguez, EO1 (SCW) Kevin Smith, SW3 Michael Edlund, CE3 Kristopher Dirkman, BU2 Adam Schinker, EO2 Bernard Lott, BU3 (SCW) Michael Sumrow, BU2 Mark Edgren, UT2 Paul Beckford, SKC Timothy Volkmuth.

Commanding Officer

Greetings Family and Friends of NMCB-25. Today marks the end of week eight since our arrival in Iraq. During this time, work has certainly not been scarce and our Seabees are doing a tremendous job, and I hope that you are as proud of them as I am.



CDR David Marasco

This past Sunday was Mother's Day and one of our Seabees, Equipment Operator 3rd Class Rodriguez did an outstanding job painting a 4X8 sheet of plywood for a life size card that has been made available to send pictures back home (See picture below). I personally want to wish each and every of our Mothers back home a very Happy Mother's Day and thank you for all your support!

LT Platz and his group are working hard at various locations throughout our area of operation, and they are doing an outstanding job. Chief Hess and our crew continue to support our mission at Camp Moreell, providing outstanding support to all Seabees who flow in and out of Iraq, Kuwait, and other locations supported by Seabees in Southwest Asia. Command Master Chief Benzinger and I will be visiting them all very soon and I look forward to sharing the details with you in our next letter.



In the last couple weeks our Seabees flawlessly executed some very important missions that we have been planning. I will tell you that each of these missions involved fabrication of special materials, equipment and tools

and mission specific rehearsals to ensure that we get in, perform the work, and get out in the shortest amount of time possible without sacrificing safety and quality. I am so proud of our Seabees for doing such an outstanding job, and all of this being done in some of the most arduous conditions they will ever encounter in their lifetime.

To update you on the status of our war zone benefits, I am very pleased to share with you and the bulk of our troops began receiving those benefits on April's LES. This news came as a

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BACKGROUND PHOTO: A K-span building covers a new hospital that Seabees of NMCB 25 are building.

BACK COVER: CE3 Man Watson prepares to feed new wire though conduit.

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Story submissions are encouraged from each detachment and Specialty Unit, but there is no guarantee each will be represented in every newsletter.

Comments, correspondence, and questions may be addressed to NMCB 25 Public Affairs, NMCB 25 Main Body, FPO AP 96601-5113.

pleasant surprise and much of that thanks goes to Chief Ratajczak and our personnel support team back in Port Hueneme. Those whose benefits did not show up on April's LES should see theirs in May and at the very latest June. We continue to pay close attention to all pay matters and we work hard to correct issues as they arise. If you do have a specific concern with your spouses pay, please contact your spouse for the details. I also ask you to please not forward any questions to the Reserve Centers because they cannot help you, only we can. Once we are made aware of an issue we are on it.



The Command Master Chief and I attended a Command conference with the 9th Naval Construction Regiment (Our Regiment). This was a great opportunity to meet with their staff and the other engineer units under the 9th's Command. In our environment teamwork and communication are a must and it gives the Command leadership the opportunity to share experiences allowing us to perform as a single integrated Navy, Marine Corp and Army team (Please see the photo to the left).

Please enjoy this addition, and until next time, have a great Seabee day.

I communicate with my wife on a regular basis via email. There are periodic outages, both planned and unplanned. Phone quality on the Camp is poor, but we stay in touch. My son has already had two deployments here and we did not hear from him on a regular basis. He was out on the road a lot, sometimes for long periods. And, he doesn't write letters or use email very much. We were always happy for those occasional 3:00 a.m. calls.

Executive Officer

Some of our Seabees have good access to communications facilities at our various locations. Others are out working on projects, which do not permit easy access. Letters may have to be the primary communication form for them.

Most of us have been mobilized four months and here for about two. My wife and I have talked about how slow time has moved for her and fast for me. Here we are always busy with a lot of demands on our time which helps time pass quickly. Life still has to go on at home, the daily rituals don't allow you to bury yourself in your work and push aside the thoughts of loved ones even for a brief period.

NMCB 25 Seabees are involved in a lot of good work – improving the infrastructure of Iraq and building and improving camps for our Soldiers and Marines. They are immensely appreciated everywhere. It helps to know our efforts are needed and appreciated.

We may not be able to always communicate with you on a regular basis, but please know your efforts at home are also greatly appreciated by all of us. Thanks!



LCDR Thomas Logan

Command Master Chief

As we complete our fourth month of recall to active duty I look back from where we started and where we are at right now. Our people here have done great things supporting our Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines here in Iraq.

I would like to thank all of the families, friends, and employers for the support in sending letters, and care packages to all the members at NMCB 25. Care packages are appreciated and are a great morale booster. One day we had over 60 care packages arrive in the mail.

We are patiently awaiting our advancement results for our E6, E5, and E4. We will keep you all informed as soon as results are out.





LCDR Peter Muschinske

Command Chaplain

I'm sure some of you have been doing some gardening this spring. Depending on your location you may have enjoyed fresh radishes or spinach (not to mention rhubarb!). Perhaps you are planting vegetables, flowers, shrubs or trees? So are we! Yes, a few Seabees are literally growing a tomato plant or two or nurturing a wild flower near a work or berthing space. But there is more to this "garden talk" than mere soil, seeds, water and fertilizer. In what other ways are we sowing, growing and reaping?

Our Seabee projects bear resemblance to gardening procedures. In some cases, excavation or otherwise preparing the "seedbed" is required. Footings or foundations are "planted", fresh concrete replaces the old, flooring is secured to sub flooring, and new parts are grafted where worn, useless components shriveled on the vine. Many projects have been completed and are bearing fruit; some have been passed on from our predecessors and others will likely be left in the care of others when our season is over and theirs begins. We are making a lasting difference in Iraq. What kind of difference will this deployment make for us—Seabees or civilian—as we go forward from one growing season to another, from a summer apart to our reunion sometime in fall?

Last month my mother e-mailed me a quote from an old family friend who said: "When God wants to grow a squash He takes 6 months. When He wants to grow an oak, He takes 100 years." God is in the people growing business and so are we. As important as this mission is, it is still only six months of a lifetime of bearing fruit, of contributing to families, communities and God's people around the world. Seabees have a long, proud history of improving the lives of others and as family members, you have a share of our success. Military Spouse Day was the 12th of May and we honored you for your sacrifices and dedication. It is our hope that we are making personal history, that this mission will reap a bounty of benefits for the people of this country and region. And beyond the end of this deployment we will continue to grow and change the world in new ways.

I'm not saying that there aren't challenges. What gardener doesn't have to deal with drought, wind, storms or pests? A few may conclude that this growing season was as dry as a day in the Syrian Desert and as fruitless as a barren landscape. Remember that our lives are not defined by any one six month period. Our goal is not to be an acorn squash at the end of a summer gone, but a sturdy oak, producing acorns across the course of a lifetime. We are doing well here and know of our prayers for you. Mav the Lord continue to bless and encourage you.

Detachment site - Alfa Yard



(front) CM2 Charles Durham, CM1 John Stoen, EO2 James Russell, EO1 (SCW) Robert Welch, EO2 Travis Murphy, CM1 Joseph Vondran, EOCN Eric Brown, CMCN Mark Muraglia, CMCN Kevin Gunter. (back) EO2 Xaviar Carr, CM2 Curtis Korzilius, EO2 Shane Clifton, EO1 Michael LaRue, EO1 Stephen Meyers, EO1 Paul Decoster, EO1 (SCW) Richard Nelson.

Detachment Alfa Yard Completes BEEP

Construction Mechanic 1st Class Joseph Vondran is the Shop Supervisor at an Alfa yard detachment site. During the turn over process the arriving and departing Alfa yard crews must complete a Battalion Equipment Evaluation Program (BEEP).

“We must catch what’s wrong with the equipment at the time of the turnover,” said Vondran. “This way we can order the parts right away and get the equipment back to full operation.” Vondran knows about trucks. For the past nine years, he has been a mechanic for Freightliner Trucks and has been with the Seabees for over 14 years.

Vondran runs a crew of five Seabees. The Alfa yard workers do everything from parts expediting to working on the trucks and heavy equipment. This Alfa yard now has over 100 pieces of equipment, with most of it coming from the NMCB 133.

Vondran says the Seabees bring each truck in and go over it from tire to top, to see if it’s in poor, fair, or good condition. They check to see if they have the parts to cover the daily operation of each piece of equipment, including filters and items for general maintenance.

“You have to have a collateral pulled out so that if that truck has to go, it can do the job it’s tasked with,” said Vondran. Collateral items could include chains, binders, attachments, and extra tires.

The yard is a maze of different types of heavy equipment: Trucks, compactors, graders-the list goes on.

“We check the equipment out,” said Vondran. “I won’t be getting outside this yard for six months I think, and my office is down inside a bunker.”



Inserts for HMMWV tires help to ensure they stay mobile even after they have a flat.



EO2 Xavier Carr breaks the air seal between a tire and rim.

Vondran credits Alfa yard workers from the main body for helping complete the BEEP quickly. “We had four guys come up from Alfa Company (main body) to get the beep done quickly and keep on target, said Vondran. “That made it run real smooth. After the beep is over, then all of this is ours. Then the mission starts with actually keeping the equipment up. Each turn over we try to bring it up another level. These aren’t perfect, so we try to make it better for the next guy.”

EO2 Xavier Carr also works for Alfa Company. He fixes flats makes sure the vehicles have the collateral gear, including first aid kits and fire extinguishers.

“We are going to do very well over here,” said Carr. “We take on a little more, but we’re going to get the job done.”



Heavy equipment at the Alfa yard is used for a variety of projects. Seabees must thoroughly inspect their equipment before they are allowed to operate them on project sites.

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much is available before they even enter the yard to retrieve it.

Seabees of NMCB 25 are responsible for the largest Class-4 yard under the 9th NCR. STRATIS and a lot of hard work from these Seabees will continue to support construction projects over a large area of Western Iraq.

CE1 Glen Thieling and SKC Timothy Volkmuth discuss supply operations at a Class-4 yard in Western Iraq.



Detachment Site - Hospital Corpsman

The Battalion Aid station's mission is to provide health care and medical programs management for Marine's 9th Engineering Support Battalion, and Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 25. This includes convoy coverage, explosive ordinance disposal support, general health care, and special consultation. They also provide medical support from point of injury until medevac to a level-two facility or higher.

They provide CPR and Combat Lifesaver Classes (CLS) for Marines and Seabees. Classes usually run for three hours with an average of 25 students in attendance. The class teaches basic life saving steps, what equipment is available to them in their CLS equipment bags, and what priority to use when evacuating patients.

The corpsman provide medical support for the 9th ESB during route clearance and repair missions. They also work at the nearby Surgical Shock Trauma Platoon facility, which is a level-two trauma center.

The SSTP handles emergent and traumatic injuries that come in from the field. A full staff of anesthesiologists and surgeons are on hand to treat patients.

If that isn't enough to keep them busy, the corpsman also work at the 9th ESB (FWD) Basic Aid Station. This unit treats everything from the basic sick call, abscesses, and dermatology.



HM3 Jessica Johnson and HM3 Jamie Jaenke take a break from medical duties at a detachment site.



Reenlistment

Construction Electrician 1st Class Steven Reger reenlists for six more years with the Navy. Reger has almost 13 years in the military and has been with the Seabees for almost three years.

"I was an aviation electronics technician in the Navy for almost 10 years on active duty," said Reger. "It was enjoyable to work on aircraft, but being a Seabee is a lot more fun."

Left: CDR Marasco congratulates CE1 Steven Reger following the reenlistment ceremony.



Flags mark the entrance of a Surgical Shock Trauma Platoon facility where NMCB 25 hospital corpsman provide patient care.

Seabees Build Display for Departing Marine Corps Officer



BU2 (SS) Michael Hollman, BU3 Jeffery Dale, Cpl. Alan Witmer, and Lance Cpl. Adrian Aguilar display the plaque created for a departing Marine Corps officer.

and expressed the way they felt on a certificate that read; "in recognition of his patriotism and exceptional dedication to duty which greatly impacted and inspired all who had the privilege of serving with him."

To highlight these words, Cpl. Alan Witmer, Regimental Combat Team Seven (RCT 7) needed a plaque, but these are rather hard to find in Iraq.

The Marines decided that perhaps the Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction 25 would be able to help create one for Kendall.

The Marines approached the Seabees with a general concept for the display unit. The idea was to position the flag in the foreground and the cover the background with digicam uniform material. Beyond that, the Seabees had many more concept ideas that were more elaborate, but they were tempered by the lack of either materials or tools.

"This is our first shadowbox," said Builder 3rd Class Jeffery Dale "I'm a rough carpenter. I finished five years of active duty with NMCB 40, which consisted of either rough framing, or being knee-deep in concrete, so it was a new experience and a fun project to work on."

Some common items weren't available, so the Seabees improvised. "We didn't even have any dowels so we took a broken broom handle and cut it down," said Dale. "We raised the items up from the backboard so that we could create a 3-D effect. This way we could create a shadow within the shadow box."

The Marines were very happy with the results. One Marine joked that the Seabees had no idea of the extra work they'd committed themselves to in the future.

While the Seabees of NMCB 25 and the Marines of RCT 7 continue their missions, they realize that perhaps a small sampling of their work in Western Iraq has made it all the way to Washington, D.C.

Seabees are skilled at building big. Their work is mostly seen on a larger scale, such as runway and bridge repair, or building South West Asia huts. This month their talents were needed on a much smaller scale.

They were asked to build a plaque for a Marine Corps officer who was leaving a forward operating area to work in our nation's capital.

An event like this would be a milestone in anyone's career and the Marines wanted to make sure Maj. James Kendall knew how much they appreciated him before he left.

Some of the Marines had worked with Kendall for more than one tour overseas

Turning up the Heat at Camp Moreell

By CMC(SCW) Gary Hess

By the time 07:45 a.m. rolls around, the camp has just completed the Monday morning PT ritual. Everyone is gathering at their workspaces and “Yard Dawg” Equipment Operator 2nd class Timothy O’Toole casually informs the Alfa Company crew that the thermometer is currently reading 106 degrees. The temperatures will get much warmer today and the trend promises to continue through the summer months.

It may seem odd, but it does not feel that warm. Builder 1st Class Jerold Jenks and Construction Electrician 2nd Class Paul Gleaves, currently on force protection rotation at the ECP, assure me that it really does feel that warm. They have been on watch for some time and they cannot wait to be relieved by Builder 3rd Class John Bolinger and Builder Jeremy Dunn.

Back in Alfa Company, Equipment Operator 2nd Class Michael Rhoades is opening up the Dispatch and Licensing office to prepare for a forklift-training course. Construction Mechanic 1st Class Walter Floyd is in his domain dishing out the daily CESE maintenance assignments to his disciples. Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Enrique Martinez is preparing requisition forms for Supply to order more repair parts and Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Donald Kugler is already out in the Alfa yard preparing equipment to head to DRMO. Equipment Operator 1st Class Gerrold Atkinson is busy cycling Warehouse CESE and Construction Mechanic 1st Daniel Perry is planning for an up-armored HMMWV driving course that he will be teaching to a group of people from NAVCENT.



BU2 Mark Manes monitors progress while BU1 Jerold Jenks operates the backhoe during a trenching project. Over 2,000 feet of conduit were buried in a two-week period for an upcoming telecommunications system upgrade.



EO2 Michael Rhoades relocates a 40' container with the most popular piece of CESE in Camp Moreell – the RTCH, or retch as it is affectionately called. The Seabees receive requests from every unit in camp to relocate containers. In return, other units are quite willing to provide the camp with hard to get items. The old barter system is alive and well in Camp Moreell.

The Camp Maintenance gang is already hard at it. Builder 2nd Class Mark Manes and Builder Seth Johnson are working on a metal roofing project. Construction Electrician 2nd Class Michael Williams is discussing the plans on an upcoming electrical project with Construction Electrician 3rd Class Felipe Deguzman, Utilitiesman 1st Class Daniel Fitzpatrick is preparing his gear for the days work for the UT Shop and Steel Worker 1st Class John Zahn is gathering materials to build weapons crates for Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Matthew McCallson and Hull Maintenance Technician 3rd Class David Clendenen over in the armory. He is also working with Storekeeper 2nd Class Rosalind Gutter and Storekeeper Blair on

obtaining material for the metal racks that they want him to build in the supply warehouse.

Over in Embark, Equipment Operator 1st Class Joseph Lampert and Equipment Operator 2nd Class Nathan Schultz are working their magic on the SIPR computer. The Skipper and the Master Chief are in town and they want to make sure that their travel arrangements are locked on.

Such begins a typical day for the folks of NMCB 25 Detachment Camp Moreell, Kuwait who are assigned to work alongside NMCB 7 under the command of 22 Naval Construction Regiment (Forward). Everyone fulfills a critical piece of the puzzle that helps make this camp run like a well-oiled machine. It is Monday morning and it is a pleasure to see Seabees doing what they do best. OK, since there is no beer allowed, they are doing the next best thing that Seabees do best. They are turning to.

The role of this camp is to ultimately provide every Seabee in the CENTCOM theater of operations the military training that they need to perform their mission, wherever that may be. This is called Seabee Specific Tailored Training, or S2T2. Another role is to provide Seabees a period of decompression before they rotate home, something we call Warrior Transition.

During a typical battalion rotation, the camp is packed with about as many people as it is designed for. However, the typical Seabee is not going to stay here much more than a week, so the tight conditions can be dealt with.

While Embark is overseeing the travel plans for everyone who comes through this camp, the Supply Department is making sure that they have all the gear that Seabees will need, like the Outer Tactical Vest, or OTV, complete with bullet-proof Kevlar ESAPI plates. Camp Maintenance is making this a better place to transition through while Chief Construction Mechanic Gary Hess' Alfa Dawgs are preparing and shipping CESE to the various sites in theater.

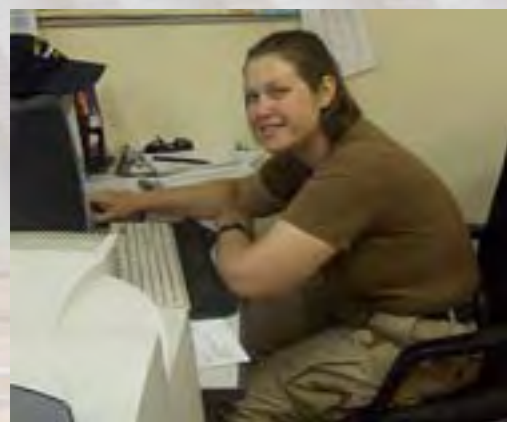
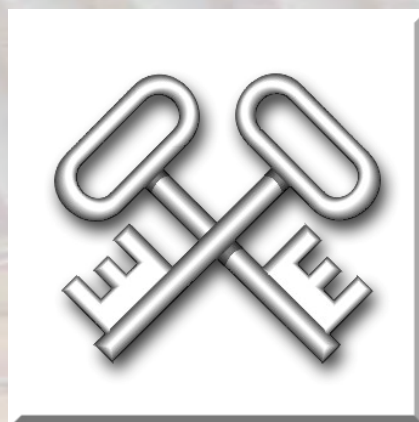
Major projects are afoot around here and Camp Maintenance is leading the charge. A new fence will be going in to replace a portion of our perimeter security fencing. Also the Armory will be getting a new building to improve their ammunition and weapons storage facilities and the Carpenters shop will be receiving a major facelift and building addition.

Certainly, the days are long and are going to get a lot warmer. The facilities improvements will not cease as the plans for the future of this place get laid out. The plan is that more people and more construction equipment will continue to roll through here. This is to be the major hub for the Seabees in this theater for the foreseeable future.

It is our privilege to represent NMCB 25 in helping shape that future for the U.S. Navy Seabees.



CM1 Dan Perry works up a sweat while cycling the electrical System on a communications platform HMMWV. Perry is the lead mechanic for Camp Moreell's Warehouse CESE Program.



SK2 Rosalind Gutter (top) and SKSN Elishia Blair (right) work diligently process all of the supply requisitions that come across their desks.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

